

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A radio communication system comprising a primary station and a plurality of secondary stations, the system having a communication channel between the primary station and a secondary station, one of the primary and secondary stations having means for transmitting power control commands to the other station to instruct it to adjust its output transmission power in steps, wherein the receiving station has combining means for processing a plurality of power control commands to determine whether to adjust its output power as a function of a requested step size included in the power control commands and a minimum step size implemented by the other station, wherein at least one of the plurality of secondary stations includes means for selecting one of a plurality of available power control step sizes in response to commands issued by the primary station.

2. (Currently Amended) A primary station for use in a radio communication system having a communication channel between the primary station and a secondary station, the primary station having means for adjusting its output transmission power in steps in response to power control commands transmitted by the secondary station, wherein combining means are provided for processing a plurality of power control commands to determine whether to adjust its output power as a function of a requested step size included in the power control commands and a minimum step size implemented by the primary station, wherein the secondary station includes means for selecting one of a plurality of available power control step sizes in response to commands issued by the primary station.

3. (Currently Amended) A secondary station for use in a radio communication system having a communication channel between the secondary station and a primary station, the secondary station having means for adjusting its transmission power in steps in response to power control commands transmitted by the primary station, wherein combining means are provided for processing a plurality of power control commands to determine whether to adjust its output power as a function of a required step size included in the power control commands and a minimum available step size implemented by the secondary station, wherein the secondary station further having means for selecting one of a plurality of available power control step sizes in response to commands issued by the primary station.

4. (Currently Amended) The secondary station as claimed in claim 3, ~~further comprising means for selecting one of a plurality of available power control step sizes in response to commands issued by the primary station, and~~ wherein the combining means are operative if the required step size is less than the minimum available step size.

5. (Previously Presented) The secondary station as claimed in claim 4, further comprising means for processing a group of power control commands together, a size of the group being determined by the minimum available step size and the required step size.

6. (Previously Presented) The secondary station as claimed in claim 5, wherein the size of the group is equal to the ratio between the minimum available step size and the required step size.

7. (Previously Presented) The secondary station as claimed in claim 3, wherein the combining means are operative in response to commands issued by the primary station to process a group of power control commands together and in that a size of the group is predetermined.

8. (Previously Presented) The secondary station as claimed in claim 7, wherein the power control step size is predetermined.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a radio communication system comprising a primary station and a plurality of secondary stations, the system having a communication channel between the primary station and a secondary station, the method comprising the acts of:

transmitting power control commands by a transmitting station to a receiving station to instruct it to adjust its power in steps, and

processing by the receiving station a plurality of power control commands to determine whether to adjust its output transmission power as a function of a required step size included in the power control commands and a minimum available step size implemented by the secondary station, wherein the receiving station has means for selecting one of a plurality of available power control step sizes in response to commands issued by the transmitting station.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the acts of:

the transmitting station instructing the receiving station to use a particular power control step size, and

by the receiving station combining power control commands if the required step size is less than the minimum available step size.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 10, further comprising the acts of:

by the receiving station processing a group of power control commands together, and determining the size of the group depending on the minimum available step size and the required step size.

12. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the size of the group being equal to the ratio between the minimum available step size and the required step size.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the act of by the receiving station processing a group of power control commands together in response to commands issued by the transmitting station and by the size of the group being predetermined.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the power control step size is predetermined.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 14 wherein the transmitting act on the communication channel takes place in frames, and wherein the groups of power control commands have predetermined positions with respect to a start of each frame.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the size of the group is exactly divisible into the number of power control commands transmitted in a frame.

17. (Previously Presented) The radio communication system of claim 1, wherein the combining means processes a group of commands having a size being equal to a ratio between the minimum step size and the requested step size.

18. (Previously Presented) The primary station of claim 2, wherein the combining means processes a group of commands having a size being equal to a ratio between the minimum step size and the requested step size.

19. (Previously Presented) The secondary station of claim 3, wherein the combining means processes a group of commands having a size being equal to a ratio between the minimum available step size and the required step size.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the processing act processes a group of commands having a size being equal to a ratio between the minimum available step size and the required step size.